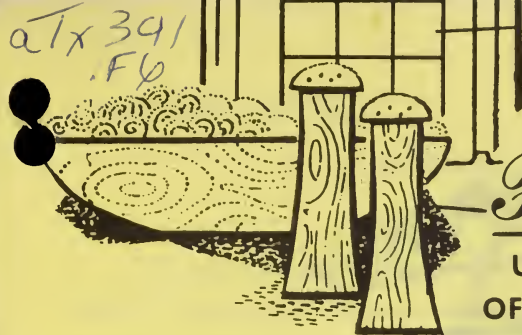


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Food and Home Notes

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There are four general classes of pickle products: Brined pickles, fresh-pack pickles, fruit pickles and relishes.

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If you're planning on pickling pears and peaches -- they may be slightly underripe for pickling, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Remember that cucumbers deteriorate rapidly, especially at room temperature. The best advice is to use them as soon as possible, or refrigerate them, or spread them where they will be well ventilated and cool.

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Un-iodized table salt can be used in pickling, but the materials added to the salt to prevent caking may make the brine cloudy. Do not use iodized table salt; it may darken pickles. Use pure granulated salt if available.

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Cider vinegar, with its mellow acid taste, gives a nice blending of flavors, but may darken white or light-colored fruits and vegetables.

AN ANALYSIS

---of beekeeping

If you're looking for a profitable hobby, don't go in for beekeeping. Honey production in the United States is not profitable. The unit price received by beekeepers for bulk, extracted honey has not changed in the last 25 years. But, the cost of production has increased.

The honey bees are, of course, of great value to agricultural production. Even so, the numbers of honey bee colonies have declined steadily since about 1954, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture production research reports.

Honey production depends largely on weather, especially honey from native plants. And--in the Southwest some of the best sources and quality of honey are from native plants.

Pollination income was far more certain than honey income for most beekeepers. This study on beekeeping, reported by the Agricultural Research Service of USDA, was made to determine annual production costs and returns of beekeepers and to recommend to beekeepers ways of reducing costs and increasing income.



AMERICAN BONSAI

--growing it "your" way

Bonsai, those miniature trees grown in pots, can be created in a few seasons. The aim of bonsai culture is to develop a tiny tree that has all the elements of a large tree growing in a natural setting. Bonsai are outdoors most of the year, but from time to time they can be brought indoors for display. However, certain tropical trees, shrubs and vines can be continuously kept indoors full time as bonsai.

Bonsai, as an art form, stems from ancient oriental culture. It originated in China and was developed by the Japanese. However, American bonsai are much freer in concept and style than the Japanese culture.

To produce a realistic illusion of a mature tree, look for plants with small leaves or needles, short internodes, or distances between leaves, attractive bark or roots, branching characteristics for good twig forms. You must decide on a style -- formal upright, informal upright, slanting, cascade, or semicascade.

Bonsai need daily watering during their growing season and frequent careful pruning. Among the plants recommended for the beginner are: Firethorn which is an evergreen with small leaves; Cotoneaster (similar to firethorn); the Dwarf pomegranate; and Juniper which is a hardy evergreen with heavy foliage that takes well to pruning. Shaping the bonsai your way makes the difference.

If you want to collect plants from the wild, you can take that route, too -- and it can be fun. However, traveling in wild terrain where such specimens are found can be hazardous so, approach this idea with caution. You must also have the permission to dig from the owner of the property, and unless you really are experienced in collecting plants, this can be the wrong approach. At any rate, it would be an interesting project to grow bonsai.

A booklet on "Growing Bonsai" (Home and Garden Bulletin No. 206) has just been published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and it is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for 306. If you can get to a Government Printing Office Bookstore, you can buy it for just 20 cents. Stock No. 0100-02272.

WINTER VACATIONS

---In the National Forests

Fun seekers head for the hills -- the snow country -- when winter comes. The National Forest lands are ideal spots to lure skiers and snowmobilers. Downhill skiing is the most popular of winter sports. And, most major ski areas in the Western States are situated in whole or in part on National Forest lands.

There are about 208 developed ski areas with a total capacity of 378,000 persons in the National Forests. Many areas have restaurants, lodges, ski schools, and other services -- all operated under permits from the Forest Service, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Seasons run from November to as late as June in the high country, where the best places to ski are high in the mountains, where the snow is deep and dependable, and enough development has taken place to make skiing a pleasure.

Ski touring, or cross-country skiing, is a sport for the experts because it requires experience. Cross-country skiing, like mountain climbing and wilderness hiking, should never be undertaken alone. Snowmobiling has swept into a leading position in the field of winter sports -- and in 1971 some 2 million visitor days were devoted to use of ice and snow craft, including snowmobiles in the National Forests. Information and colorful ski safety posters are available from any of the Forest Service regional offices or the Washington, D.C. office: Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

COMMENTS AND INQUIRIES TO:

Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Press Service, Room 535-A, Office of Communication, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202 447-5898.